

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

INTERNATIONAL TRUST COMPANY BUILDING (see for add'l info)

AND/OR COMMON

NAME

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

39-47 MILK STREET

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

BOSTON

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

MA.

VICINITY OF

CODE

025

COUNTY

SUFFOLK

CODE

025

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
DISTRICT	PUBLIC	OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE
BUILDINGS	PRIVATE	X UNOCCUPIED	MUSEUM
STRUCTURE	BOTH	WORK IN PROGRESS	COMMERCIAL
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	EDUCATIONAL
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED	ENTERTAINMENT
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT
		X NO	INDUSTRIAL
			MILITARY
			TRANSPORTATION
			OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

FRANK SAWYER / SIXTY-FIVE BEDFORD STREET INC.

STREET &amp; NUMBER

39 MILK ST

STATE

MA

GOVDOC

BRA

4703

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

SUFFOLK COUNTY REGISTRY OF DEEDS

STREET &amp; NUMBER

PEMBERTON SQUARE

STATE

MA

CITY, TOWN

BOSTON

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

MASSACHUSETTS

TITLE

1) INVENTORY OF THE HISTORIC ASSETS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

DATE

APRIL 1978

FEDERAL X STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

CITY, TOWN

BOSTON

STATE

MA

## DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

International Trust Company

The building is located on Milk Street near the heart of the Downtown Financial District. It is in close proximity to Washington Street and the Old South Church, Post Office Square, and two major new bank buildings, and is within five minutes of Park Street, Government Center, and the Washington Street shopping area. The immediate area is characterized by a mix of 4 and 5 story post-fire commercial buildings, 8 to 15 story turn-of-the-century elevator office buildings, and modern high-rise office towers.

The International Trust Company Building is a nine-story office building, five bays wide and deep, measuring approximately 100 feet on each side and 125 feet from sidewalk to cornice line. It is constructed of load-bearing masonry piers and walls set into a reinforced concrete foundation, with floors supported on steel I-beams. This proto-skeleton frame is faced with buff-colored Indiana limestone and has plinths of polished Quincy granite and a flat, composition roof.

Designed by the prominent Boston architect, William G. Preston, the building was built in two stages. The original portion, completed in 1893, was 8 stories high and 2 bays wide on Milk Street, extending the full five bays back along Devonshire. Built by the noted Boston firm of Gooch & Pray, this earlier building used portions of the foundation and internal structure of its predecessor, the five-story 'Iron Building'.

Preston enlarged the 1893 building substantially in 1906, by extending it along Milk to Arch Street (adding a central bay and two end bays which duplicated the two originals) and adding a story to the top. In the process, he converted the originally offset arched entrance on the Milk Street facade to a window, and replaced the earlier heavy, bracketed stone cornice with a lighter copper one (which is now missing). This addition matched the original scrupulously, in terms of material, style, and ornament, so that there are now no noticeable seams separating old from new construction. The addition did, however, alter the building's overall proportions, making it appear blockier and less columnar.

Contemporary references to the building's style describe it as "a combination of Renaissance and Romanesque", or, more simply, "Roman Renaissance", although to the modern eye the 'Renaissance' or Beaux-Arts elements clearly predominate. The five arcaded two-story window bays on the bottom floors of each of the three dressed facades form the building's base. These are separated by modified Corinthian pilasters and punctuated at the top with baroque cartouches, and the section is topped with a projecting, molded string course. Due to a sloping grade towards Devonshire Street, the basement floor along that facade is at street level. Low entranceways decorated with ornate cast-iron grillwork at the Milk/Devonshire corner lead directly to this basement floor, where the safe deposit vaults were originally located.

two stages in  
1893 and 1906

# 2 SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD

PREHISTORIC     ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  
 1400-1499     ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC  
 1500-1599     AGRICULTURE  
 1600-1699     ARCHITECTURE  
 1700-1799     ART  
 1800-1899     COMMERCE  
 1900-     COMMUNICATIONS

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1872, 1906

BUILDER/ARCHITECT WILLIAM GIBBONS PRESTON

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The International Trust Company is significant architecturally in three areas; as a major work of a prominent Boston architect, an early example of Beaux-Arts office construction, and an early example of proto-skeleton frame construction.

The building's architect, William Gibbons Preston (1844-1910) studied for a short time at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. At first in association with his well-known father Jonathan, and later on his own, Preston designed major Boston buildings in the French Academic, Romanesque, Queen Anne and Renaissance Revival manners, including the Museum of Natural History (now Bonwit Teller), the oldest portion of the Hotel Vendome, the First Corps of Cadets Armory, and the Chadwick Lead Works. He also designed numerous Back Bay residences, demonstrating his facile command of the eclectic architectural vocabulary of the late 19th Century.

The International Trust Company Building, designed in the latter part of his career, may be his earliest Beaux-Arts design and is certainly a major work of a prominent Boston architect.

As an early example of Beaux-Arts facade treatment on a commercial structure, the International Trust Company Building anticipates the popularity of that style, especially for large-scale or public buildings, following the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Though it retains some elements of the previously popular Romanesque Style, the building possess a monumentality, a formality of facade organization, and an ornateness of detail which derive from the Beaux-Arts tradition and which mark it as an example of the 'mercantile classicism' which was soon to predominate in office architecture.

The new method of building construction based on the steel skeleton frame, developed by the so-called 'Chicago School' of architects in the 1880's and in wide use there by 1893, had an enormous impact on the scale and design of American commercial architecture. Nevertheless, these advances were slow to catch on in traditionally-minded Boston. Thus the construction of the International Trust Company Building, combining the use of traditional load-bearing masonry walls with 'modern' (and ←

still somewhat daring) reinforced concrete and steel framing, stands as an early Boston example of the use of these new methods and materials.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. DAMRELL, CHARLES S., A HALF-CENTURY OF BOSTON'S BUILDING, LOIS P. HAGER, BOSTON, 1895, p. 38, 316, 364, 370, 371, ILLUS. p. 460.
2. AMERICAN ARCHITECT VOL. 15 NO. 425 PP. 75-76 FEB 16, 1884
3. WITHEY, HENRY F. AND ELSIE RATHBURN WITHEY, BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ARCHITECTS, LOS ANGELES, 1956 pp. 486-7.
4. AMERICAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDING NEWS, VOL. 39 p. 14 p. 889, JAN. 7, 1893.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 72.00 sq. ft.

UTM REFERENCES

A	19	33,015,6,01	4,69,114,2,01
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	
C			

B	1	1,1,1,1,1,1	1,1,1,1,1,1
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the  
39-47 Milk Street, Ward 3, Assessor's parcel number 4662. Bounded  
~~the~~ corner of the structure ~~at~~ at the Northwest corner of Milk and Arch Street,  
running easterly to corner of structure at the northeast corner of Milk and Devonshire,  
thence turning and running southerly to the corner of the structure where it abuts 59 Devonshire  
St thence turning and running westerly along the party wall to the corner of the structure  
where it abuts 20 Arch St. there turning running northerly to the beginning point.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

CANDICE JENKINS, NATIONAL REGISTER COORDINATOR

ORGANIZATION

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

STREET & NUMBER

294 (WASHINGTON) STREET

DATE

MAY 97

CITY OR TOWN

BOSTON

TELEPHONE

617-727-8470

STATE

MATTHEW KIEFER  
LANDMARKS COMM.  
BOSTON

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

7. Description cont'd

The rectangular central entrance on Milk Street is topped by a heavy projecting Baroque pediment supported on paired consoles, flanked by large, arched windows with voluted keystones and relief-carved griffins in the spandrels. The oxeeye windows in the center of the Arch and Devonshire Street facades are surrounded by foliate carving, and framed by large allegorical figures carved by the noted New York sculptor Max Bachman (whose most notable work was the series of allegorical figures on the Pulitzer Building in New York.)

The five-story shaft or main section of the building is divided into three horizontal segments. A bottom story of arcaded, round-arched windows with deep reveals and molded extrados is clearly derived from the work of H. H. Richardson. The middle three-story segment is composed of three bays of multiple windows separated by foliate relief-carved spandrels, and framed within carved, molded surrounds. A top story of rectangular windows separated by paired colonettes has wider, panelled divisions which continue the lines of the bay separations below. The entire section is capped with a rinceau-carved frieze, and is framed in on the Arch and Devonshire facades by small, rectangular windows set into wide stone piers at the ends of each floor.

The bottom story of the two-story section repeats the arcaded floor of round-arched windows below, except that the intermediate pilasters are fluted and, again, wider separations continue the window bay divisions below. The added top story is composed of small, rectangular windows divided by paired consoles which mirror those in the entrance pediment. The window bay divisions are marked on this floor by high relief cartouches which, like much of the carved decoration, derive from the Beaux-Arts tradition. The light color, smooth finish, and tight mortar joints of the stone facing are also evocative of Beaux-Arts monumentality and classicism.

No alterations have occurred since the major addition in 1906 except for a small ~~mechanical~~ roof top ~~structure~~ to house mechanical equipment and a small ~~canopy~~ at the main entrance.

8. Significance cont'd

The building's historical significance derives from its origin as the home office of a major New England trust company. As such, it reflects the growth of banking and finance in late 19th Century Boston, and the growth of the downtown business district, with consequent changes in land use.

The International Trust Company was founded in 1879, in the wake of Boston's rapid recovery from the Panic of 1873. Originally housed in a five-story building built shortly after the 1872 Fire, the firm's steady growth in the boom years of the 1880's and early 90's caused it to undertake the construction of a new home office on the same site, in 1893. By this time, the firm was among the four or five largest in New England, boasting combined assets of about 7 million dollars.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC International Trust Co. Building  
AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN Boston  
VICINITY OF \_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY Suffolk  
STATE Massachusetts

**3 MAP REFERENCE**

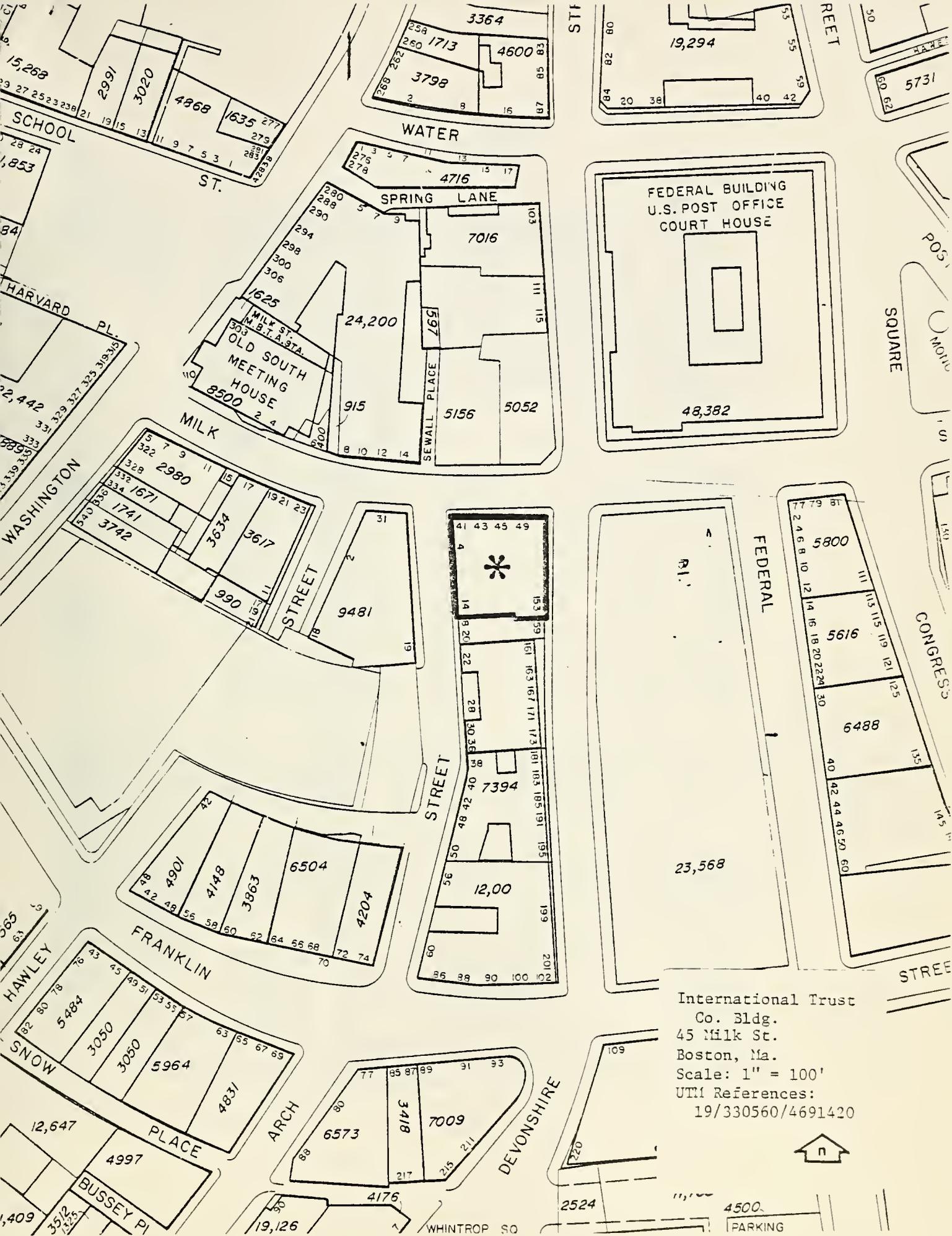
SOURCE Boston Redevelopment Authority Photogrammetric Series

SCALE 1"=100' DATE 1965

**4 REQUIREMENTS**

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSURE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

**1 NAME**  
HISTORIC International Trust Co. Building

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN Boston

— VICINITY OF

COUNTY Suffolk

STATE Massachusetts

**3 PHOTO REFERENCE**

PHOTO CREDIT Boston Redevelopment Authority, Pierce Pearman DATE OF PHOTO July 1977

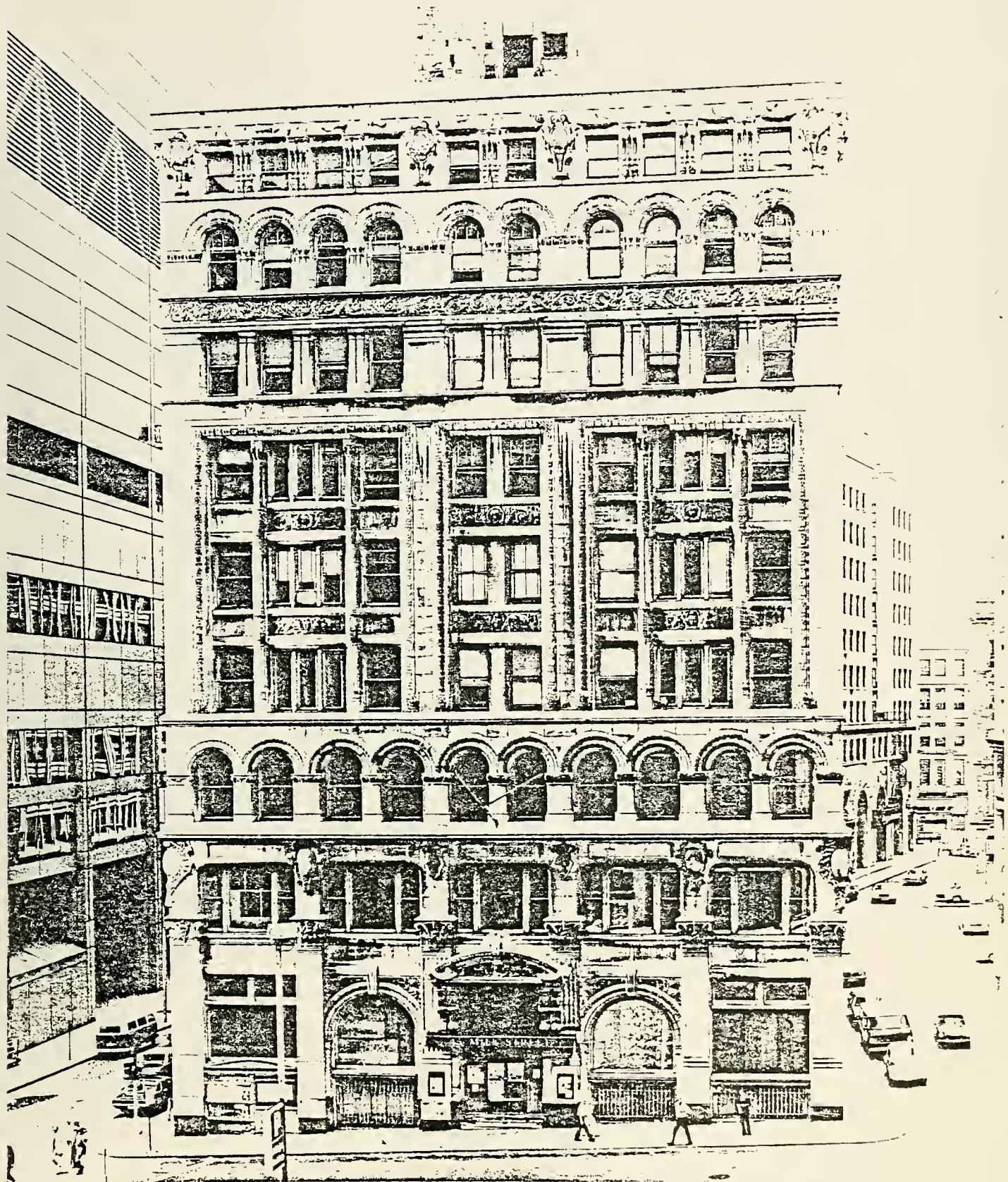
NEGATIVE FILED AT Boston Redevelopment Authority, Boston, MA

**4 IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO

View of north (front) elevation



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

**NAME**

HISTORIC International Trust Co. Building

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN Boston

VICINITY OF \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY Suffolk

STATE Massachusetts

Sets \_\_\_\_\_

**3 MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE U.S.G.S.

SCALE 1"=24,000'

DATE 1970

**4 REQUIREMENTS**

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

BOSTON SOUTH QUADRANGLE  
MASSACHUSETTS  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

3538  
(*N*<sub>2</sub>)<sup>+</sup>

This historical map of Boston Harbor and surrounding areas is part of the U.S. Army Map Service's 1:62,500 Topographic Series. The map covers the area from Salem, 14 miles to the west, down to the coast near Winthrop. Key features include:

- BOSTON HARBOR:** Labeled with "Tidal Flat".
- WINTHROP:** A town located to the east.
- LOGAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT:** Located to the east of the harbor.
- INNER HARBOR:** A large area labeled "HARBOR" containing several naval facilities:
  - U.S. NAVAL RES:**
  - Dry Dock:**
  - Commonwealth Pier** and **Fish Pier**.
- Governors Island:** An island in the harbor.
- CITY POINT:** A residential and industrial area with numerous streets labeled, including **BROADWAY**, **E. 5TH ST.**, **St. Peters**, **Sch.**, **Independence Square**, **Marine Park**, and **Day BLVD**.
- Pleasure Bay:** A bay area near Castle Island.
- Fort Independence:** Located on Castle Island.
- Head Island:** A small island near the shore.
- TOLLGATE:** Located on the western side of the map.
- Central Station:** Located in East Boston.
- Jeffries Point:** A point on the eastern shore of the harbor.
- U.S. NAVAL RESRES:** Located near Jeffries Point.
- Camp Hill:** Located near the water tank.
- Fire Station:** Located near the Magport area.
- Water Tank:** Located near Camp Hill.
- ATHLETIC FIELD:** Located in the northern part of the map.
- SALEM 14 MI.** and **0.4 MI. TO MASS. 145**: Distance markers.
- 730 000 FEET**: Scale marker.
- 334**: Grid reference.
- 335**: Grid reference.
- 71°00' 42°22'30"**: Coordinates.
- 4693**, **500 000 FEET**, **4692**, **4691**, **4690**, **4689**, **20'**: Various grid references and coordinates.
- Inter Co 45 M Bost UTM 19**: Text on the right side of the map.
- BOSTON**: Vertical label on the bottom right.

International Trust  
Co. Bldg.  
45 Milk St.  
Boston, Ma.

**UTM References:**  
19/330560/4691420



4690

H A R B O R

BOSTON

1 20'

46894

1

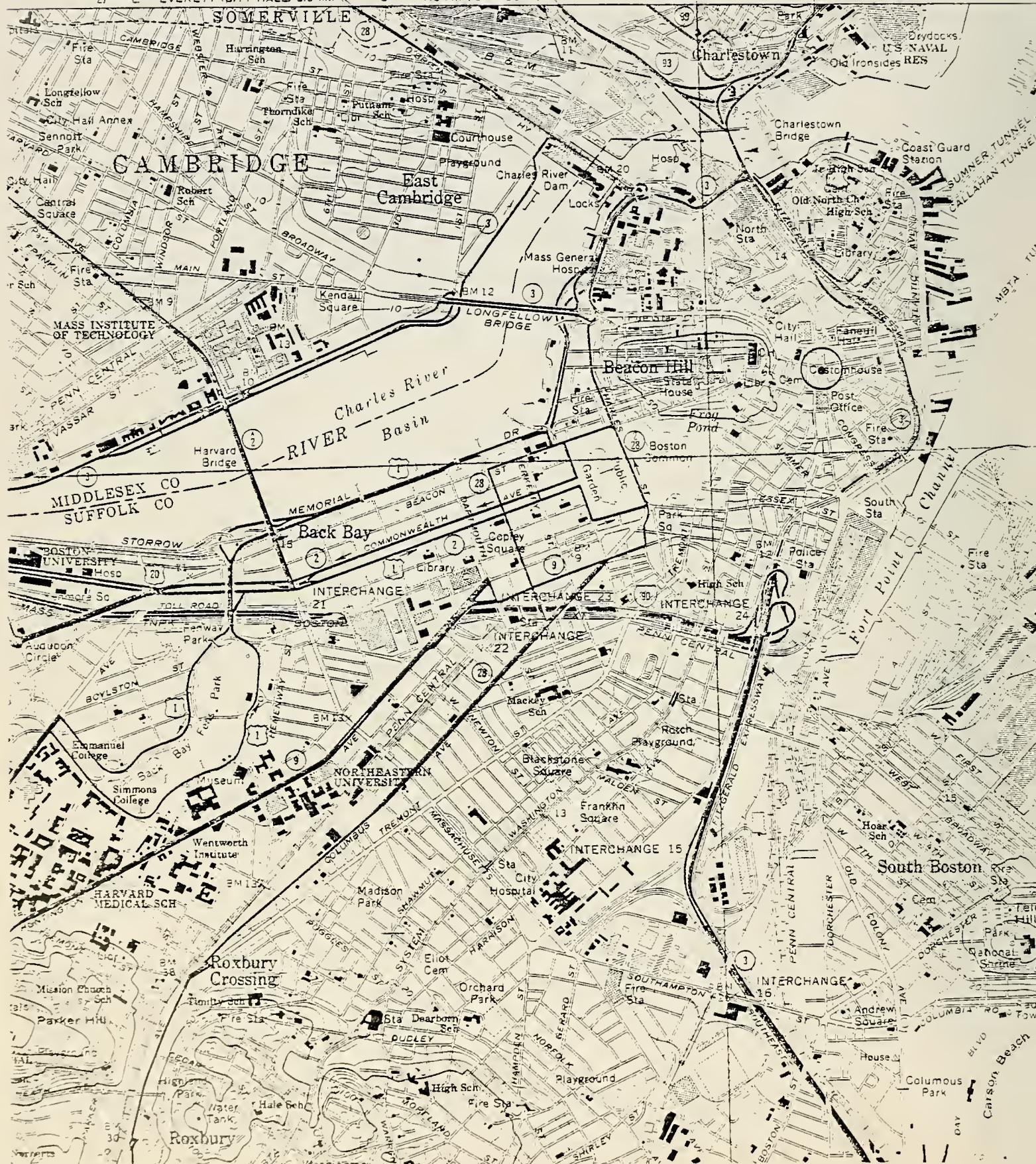
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

327000E EVERETT (CITY HALL 3.9 MI.)

5' MONTVALE 8 MI.  
1.5 MI. TO MASS 28

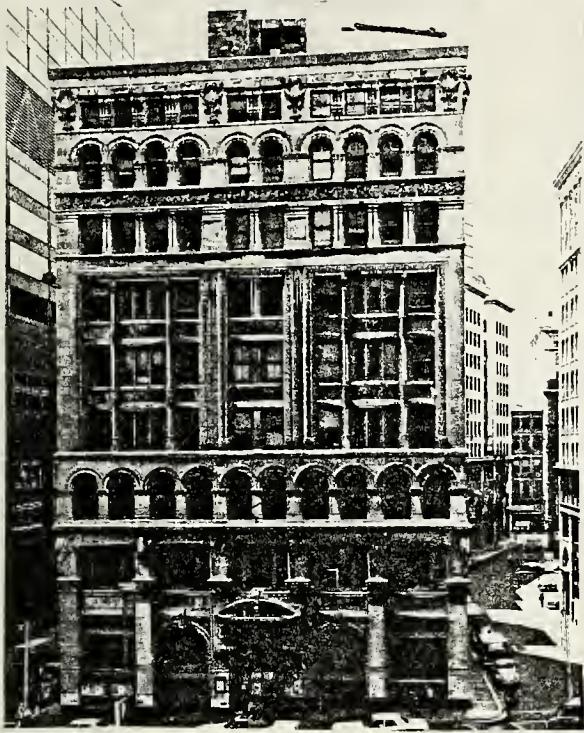
6768 1 NE  
(BOSTON NORTH)

331









ADDRESS 39-47 Milk St. COR. Devonshire St.  
Arch St.

NAME International Trust Company Building  
present original

MAP No. 25N-13E SUB AREA \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 1892-93, enlarged 1906 (Building  
source Permit)

ARCHITECT William Gibbons Preston  
source

BUILDER Gooch & Pray (enlarged by Woodbury  
source & Leighton)  
OWNER International Trust Company (Frank Sawyer)  
original present 65 Bedford St. Inc.

PHOTOGRAPHS \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE (residential) single double row 2-fam. 3-deck ten apt.  
(non-residential) commercial- bank home office

NO. OF STORIES (1st to cornice) 9 plus \_\_\_\_\_

ROOF flat cupola \_\_\_\_\_ dormers \_\_\_\_\_

MATERIALS (Frame) clapboards shingles stucco asphalt asbestos alum/vinyl  
(Other) brick stone Indiana concrete iron/steel/alum.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION Square 5 X 5 bay Beaux Arts commercial building divided  
into horizontal units of varying sizes and classical decorative treatments,  
central entrance on Milk St. marked by heavy Baroque pediment

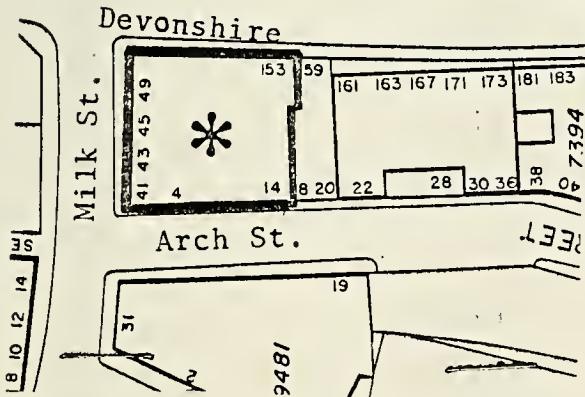
EXTERIOR ALTERATION minor moderate drastic \_\_\_\_\_

CONDITION good fair poor \_\_\_\_\_ LOT AREA 7,200 sq. feet

NOTEWORTHY SITE CHARACTERISTICS Prominent site with three street facades  
and no setback

SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd on reverse) Monumental

building architecturally significant as a  
major work by a prominent Boston architect  
as well as an early example of Beaux Arts  
office construction and an early example



Moved; date if known \_\_\_\_\_

Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion	_____
Architectural	X	Exploration/ settlement	_____	Science/ invention	_____
The Arts	_____	Industry	_____	Social/ humanitarian	_____
Commerce	X	Military	_____	Transportation	_____
Communication	_____	Political	_____		
Community/ development	_____				

Significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

of the proto-skeleton frame construction. Historically significant as the home office of a major New England trust company, reflecting both the growth of banking and finance in late 19th century Boston and the growth of the downtown business district.

Architect Wm. Gibbons Preston (1844-1910) studied for a short time at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and is known for several major Boston buildings in the French academic, Romanesque, Queen Anne and Renaissance Revival manner including the Museum of Natural History (now Bonwit Teller), the oldest section of the Hotel Vendome, the First Corps of Cadets Armory, and numerous Back Bay residences, all of which demonstrate his facile command of the eclectic architectural vocabulary of the late 19th century.

Preservation Consideration (accessibility, re-use possibilities, capacity for public use and enjoyment, protection, utilities, context)

Vacant since 1973, the building has suffered weather damage and has been stripped of much interior plumbing and hardware. The building is still considered structurally sound and, because of its prime location, is regarded as a favorable candidate for re-use. Present owner's application to demolish the building and use the land for a 57-space parking lot was denied in early 1977.

Designated a Boston Landmark on 4/25/78.

Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

1. Report of the Boston Landmarks Commission on the potential designation of the International Trust Company Building as a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 (1977) -includes extensive bibliography.